



REVELATION

Class #23

INTRODUCTION:

Revelation, (or Apocalypse) is the last book of the New Testament and of the Bible, is one of the most difficult to understand because it abounds in unfamiliar and extravagant symbolism, which at best appears unusual to the modern reader. Apocalypse, from the verb *apokalyptō*, (ἀποκαλύπτω), means 'to reveal'.

AUTHORSHIP:

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. "*John, Servant of God*" (Revelation 1, 2) and "banished for the sake of the Gospel to the isle of Patmos" (Revelation 1, 9). There is little doubt that this John is the same as the author of the Fourth Gospel and the three letters that bear his name in the Bible Canon. The Church Fathers and ancient Christian tradition (Papias, Justin, Irenaeus, Theophilus, Cyprian, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, etc.) recognize him as the author. There are some detractors, but the majority of Catholic scholarship agrees on John as the author.

This identification, however, was denied by other Fathers. Indeed, vocabulary, grammar, and style make it doubtful that the book could have been put into its present form by the same person(s) responsible for the fourth gospel. Nevertheless, there are definite linguistic and theological affinities between the two books.

WHEN AND WAS IT WRITTEN WHERE (AND CONTEXT):

John wrote The Revelation on Patmos, one of the islands of the Aegean Sea. It was a Roman penal colony. The most likely emperor who exiled John was the Emperor Domitian's reign. "*I John . . . was in the island which is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus*" (Revelation 1:9).

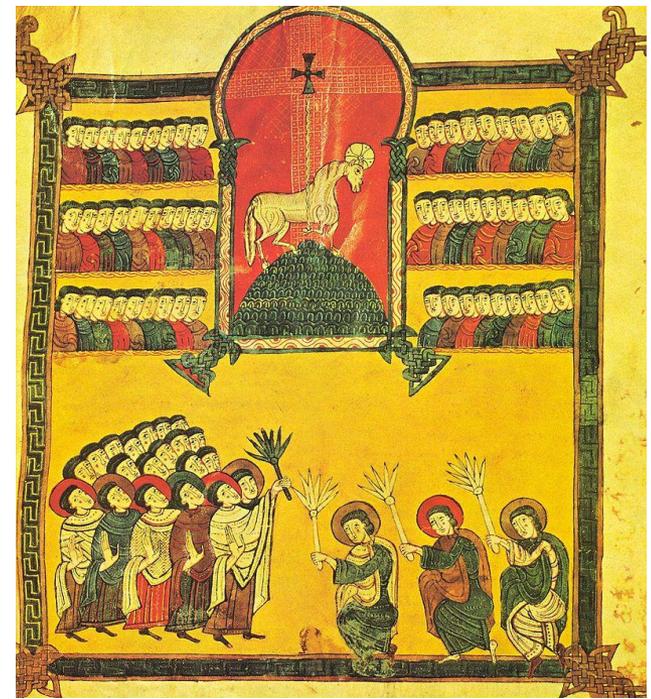


OVERVIEW:

Revelation is the only Apocalyptic book in the New Testament. Symbolic language, is one of the chief characteristics of apocalyptic literature, of which this book is an outstanding example. Such literature enjoyed wide popularity in both Jewish and Christian circles from ca. 200 B.C. to A.D. 200.

This book contains an account of visions in symbolic and allegorical language borrowed extensively from the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Whether or not these visions were real experiences of the author or simply literary conventions employed by him is an open question.

The Book of Revelation cannot be adequately understood except against the historical background that occasioned its writing. Like Daniel and other apocalypses, it was composed as resistance literature to meet a crisis. The book itself suggests that the crisis was ruthless persecution of the early church by the Roman authorities; the harlot Babylon symbolizes pagan Rome, the city on seven hills (Revelation 17:9). The book is, then, an exhortation and admonition to Christians of the first century to stand firm in the faith and to avoid compromise with paganism, despite the threat of adversity and martyrdom; they are to await patiently the fulfillment of God's mighty promises. The Book of Revelation had its origin in a time of crisis, but it remains valid and meaningful for Christians of all time. No matter what adversity or sacrifice Christians may endure, they will in the end triumph over Satan and his forces because of their fidelity to Christ the victor. This is the enduring message of the book; it is a message of hope and consolation and challenge for all who dare to believe.



CONTENT OF REVELATION:

- The prologue tells us the specific objective: *“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show his servants what must happen soon. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who gives witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ by reporting what he saw.”* (Revelation 1:1-2).

- John points out clearly who Jesus is: *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,”* says the Lord God, *“the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.”* (Revelation 1: 8).

- Writing to the seven Churches in Asia, he says: *“Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”*, addressing them individually. He speaks what is right and what is wrong on what they are doing. (Revelation 1: 11 to 3: 22).

The Seven churches in Asia: Asia refers to the Roman province of that name in western Asia Minor (modern Turkey); these representative churches are mentioned by name in Revelation 1:11, and each is the recipient of a message (Rev 2:1–3:22). Remember that seven is the biblical number suggesting fullness and completeness; thus the seer (John) is writing for the whole church.

- Revelation 4: 1-11 Speaks of John’s Vision of Heavenly Worship. The four living creatures represent the four Evangelists: *“The first creature resembled a lion, the second was like a calf, the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight.”* (Revelation 4: 8).

- Revelation 5: 1-14 Speaks of John’s Vision of The Scroll and the Lamb: *“I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who sat on the throne. It had writing on both sides and was sealed with seven seals”.* (Revelation 5: 1).

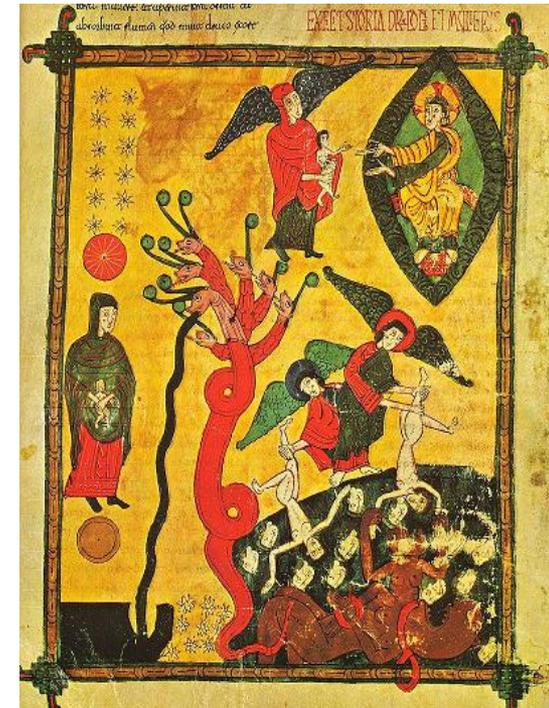


- Chapter 7 of Revelation is often one of the most misquoted passages of scripture. It speaks of those who will be saved. It begins with the number of 144,000: *“I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand marked from every tribe of the Israelites”* (Revelation 7: 4). It means 12, 000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Then it continues broadening the number speaking about the ‘Triumph of the Elect’: *“After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne and from the Lamb.”* (Revelation 7: 9-10).

- Revelation Chapters 8 thru 11 describes the ‘Blowing of the Seven Trumpets’ and their effects. It concludes with The Seventh Trumpet. *“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. There were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to his Anointed, and he will reign forever and ever.”* (Revelation 11: 15).

- Revelation 12: 1-18, is a central section of Revelation. It portrays the power of evil, represented by a dragon, in opposition to God and his people. First, the dragon pursues the woman about to give birth, but her son is saved and “caught up to God and his throne” (Revelation 12:5). Then Michael and his angels cast the dragon and his angels out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9). After this, the dragon tries to attack the boy indirectly by attacking members of his church (Revelation 12:13–17). A beast, symbolizing the Roman empire, then becomes the dragon’s agent, mortally wounded but restored to life and worshiped by all the world (Revelation 13:1–10).

- Revelation 17: 1-18 speaks of Babylon the Great and the whore of Babylon : *“Then one of the seven angels who were holding the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come here. I will show you the judgment on the great harlot who lives near the many waters. The kings of the earth have had intercourse with her, and the inhabitants of the earth became drunk on the wine of her harlotry.”* (Revelation 17: 1-2).



Babylon, the symbolic name (Revelation 17:5) of Rome, is graphically described as “the great harlot.” The pagan kings subject to Rome adopted the cult of the emperor.

- On Revelation Chapter 19 we have the triumph of the Lamb and The Victory Song: *“A voice coming from the throne said: “Praise our God, all you his servants, [and] you who revere him, small and great.” Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: “Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, [our] God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready.”* (Revelation 19: 5-7).

- Revelation Chapter 21 speaks of ‘The New Heaven and the New Earth’: *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”*

The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Then he said, “Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true.” He said to me, “They are accomplished. I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.” (Revelation 21: 1-6).



Revelation has 22 Chapters.

THE OUTLINE OF REVELATION IS:

- 1.) Prologue (Revelation 1:1–3).**
- 2.) Letters to the Churches of Asia (Revelation 1:4–3:22).**
- 3.) God and the Lamb in Heaven (Revelation 4:1–5:14).**
- 4.) The Seven Seals, Trumpets, and Plagues, with Interludes (Revelation 6:1–16:21).**
- 5.) The Punishment of Babylon and the Destruction of Pagan Nations (Revelation 17:1–20:15).**
- 6.) The New Creation (Revelation 21:1–22:5).**
- 7.) Epilogue (Revelation 22:6–21).**